

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00

USIE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01

PRS-01 SS-15 DPW-01 EUR-25 RSR-01 INRE-00 /096 W

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O 210305 Z MAY 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1889

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MILI, MOPS, VS

SUBJECT CASUALTY RESOLUTION TEAM COMPLETES OPERATIONS IN MR IV.

THE FOLLOWING SENT SAIGON FROM AMCONSUL CAN THO 20 MAY 73 REPEATED
FOR YOUR ACTION AND INFO. QUOTE:

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MILI, MOPS, VS

SUBJECT: CASUALTY RESOLUTION TEAM COMPLETES OPERATIONS IN MR IV

REF: CAN THO 0326

1. THE CASUALTY RESOLUTION TEAM COMPLETED FOUR DAYS OF DIGGING
AND SIFTING THROUGH MUD IN THE HOT SUN AT THE BAC LIEU CRASH SITE
LATE MAY 18. THEY WILL DEPART CAN THO BY C-130 FOR RETURN TO
NAKHON PHANOM AT NOON MAY 19. RESULTS AT THIS TIME ARE: POSITIVE
IDENTIFICATION OF THE CRASHED AIRCRAFT AS AN
A-4; AND POSSIBLE IDENTIFICATION OF THE SPECIFIC AIRCRAFT THROUGH
SOME SERIALLY NUMBERED PIECES OF THE WRECKAGE. THE TEAM WAS
UNABLE TO RETRIEVE THE ENGINE, OR HUMAN REMAINS. THE TEAM
RECOVERED
OBJECTS WHICH MAY BE BONE FRAGMENTS WHICH WILL BE SUBJECTED TO
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LABORATORY ANALYSIS.

2. THE VINH BINH SITE AT XR320920 EXAMINED MAY 17 PROVED TO BE A "DRY HOLE." AFTER SWEEPING AND PROBING A 400 SQUARE METER AREA, THE TEAM RETURNED TO CAN THO. VILLAGERS HAVE NO RECOLLECTION OF A HELICOPTER HAVING CRASHED IN THE AREA. THEY STATE THAT ONE DID CRASH IN 1970 SOME FOUR KILOMETERS TO THE NORTH BUT RESCUE HELICOPTERS WERE UNABLE TO GO INTO THE AREA BECAUSE OF A HEAVY VC TROOP CONCENTRATION. THE TEAM WAS UNABLE TO INVESTIGATE THE ALTERNATE AREA BECAUSE OF LACK OF SECURITY AND NO PRIOR COORDINATION. THE REPORTED CRASH SITE IS IN CANG LONG DISTRICT AND ALL COORDINATION HAS BEEN MADE WITH THE TIEU CAN DISTRICT CHIEF. THE DISTRICT CHIEF ESTIMATES IT WOULD TAKE ONE DAY TO SECURE THE AREA.

3. WHILE GVN COOPERATION WAS MODEL IN BAC LIEU AS STATED IN THE REFTEL, IT LEFT SOMETHING TO BE DESIRED IN VINH BINH. IN BOTH BAC LIEU AND VINH BINH, PROVINCE OFFICIALS KNEW IN ADVANCE THAT ACTUAL CRASH SITES WERE NOT AS REPORTED BUT WERE A FEW KILOMETERS AWAY. THE BAC LIEU PROVINCE CHIEF APPLIED INITIATIVE IN SECURING THE KNOWN CRASH SITE TWO OR THREE KILOMETERS AWAY, ENABLING THE TEAM TO MOVE OPERATIONS THERE ON THE FIRST DAY. HE ALSO HAD HIS DEPUTY SECTOR COMMANDER AT THE SITE THE ENTIRE FIRST DAY TO ASSURE THAT THE OPERATION STARTED SMOOTHLY. THE VINH BINH PROVINCE CHIEF, ON THE OTHER HAND, DELEGATED THE COORDINATING FUNCTION TO THE TIEU CAN DISTRICT CHIEF, AND IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO MOVE TO THE ALTERNATE SITE IN CANG LONG ON SHORT NOTICE. NOR WERE THERE SENIOR PROVINCE OFFICIALS AT THE VINH BINH SITE, EVEN THOUGH THE CONSULATE GENERAL RECOMMENDED SUCH REPRESENTATION TO THE PROVINCE CHIEF. COMMENT: THE VINH BINH PROVINCE CHIEF IS PROBABLY NOT TOO COOPERATIVE A FRAME OF MIND AS HE IS UNDER INVESTIGATION FOR CORRUPTION AND REMAINS IN SECLUSION.

4. WHILE THIS FIRST CASUALTY RESOLUTION OPERATION IN THE DELTA WENT VERY SMOOTHLY, THE CONSULATE GENERAL HAS SOME RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE OPERATIONS WITH WHICH THE TEAM LEADER CONCURS:

A. CLEAR SEVERAL SITES IN ADDITION TO THOSE SELECTED FOR INVESTIGATION WITH THE FPJMC ; HAD AN ALTERNATE SITE BEEN AVAILABLE, THE VINH BINH TEAM COULD HAVE SHIFTED OPERATIONS.

B. THE JCRC SHOULD CABLE SUPPORT REQUIREMENTS IN ADVANCE OF TEAM DEPLOYMENT AND IN AS MUCH DETAIL AS POSSIBLE. THE CONSULATE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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GENERAL DID NOT KNOW ABOUT EQUIPMENT STORAGE REQUIREMENTS UNTIL THE CONTROL TEAM'S ARRIVAL, NOR THE EXACT NUMBER OF TEAM PERSONNEL UNTIL THEY ACTUALLY ARRIVED.

C. THE C-130 AIRCRAFT SHOULD

LAND AT CAN THO AIRFIELD INSTEAD OF BINH THUY. TEAM EQUIPMENT IS STORED AT CAN THO AIRFIELD WHERE THE U. S. HAS LIMITED FACILITIES. THERE ARE NONE AT BINH THUY AND BINH THUY ACCESS IS DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN. CAN THO AIRFIELD IS CLOSER THAN BINH THUY.

D. IT WOULD BE WISE TO SEND AN ADVANCE OFFICER TO THE SUSPECTED CRASH SITE WELL PRIOR TO THE TEAM'S ARRIVAL. THE OFFICER, ACCOMPANIED BY A CONSULATE GENERAL INTERPRETER AND PERHAPS A PROVINCIAL REPRESENTATIVE, WOULD CONDUCT AN INITIAL SURVEY OF THE SITE, PINNING DOWN PRECISE LOCATIONS. THE ADVANCE OFFICER WOULD THEN RECOMMEND THE SIZE AND COMPOSITION OF THE RECOVERY TEAM TO JCRC.

5. COMMENT: SOME ARVN OFFICIALS REMARKED THAT IT WAS GOOD TO SEE SOME AMERICAN UP FORMS AROUND AGAIN, AS CONTRASTED WITH POLISH AND HUNGARIANS ONES (THE TEAM'S HELICOPTER PAD WAS NEXT TO THE ICCS AIR OPS AREA). THE TEAM MEMBERS WORKED HARD AND CONDUCTED THEMSELVES ADMIRABLY THROUGHOUT THEIR STAY IN THE DELTA.

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